

When I was in the last years of school, I kept a collection of unfamiliar, useful, or beautiful words; I named it "Ambit and Clerisy" after the first two definitions. When I was 26, in celebration of having the chance to use the word "spandrel" in explaining something to a manager, I decided to dig out its notebook and share the full text with everyone.

AMBIT & CLERISY

This is a word list.

Ambit: Bounds, scope, extent "The ambit of this idea is..." Fr. Latin amitus, a compass. Fr. ambire, go round. (See ambient.) *[Here and throughout the text, "fr." means "from", not "French".]*

Clerisy: Those who can read and write; the educated people of a country.

Lucubration: (The results of) nocturnal study.

Tantamount: Equivalent. (Fr. It. tanto montare, amounts to as much.)

Inculpate: Incriminate.

Incontrovertible: Indisputable.

Till: A kind of boulder clay.

Mordant: Bitterly sarcastic, as "a mordant wit".

Access: An attack of emotion.

Apprise: Inform.

Somatic: Of the body.

Spiritous: Very alcoholic.

Quasi-: Sort of, but not *really* so. Like pseudo-.

Moribund: In a dying state.

Appraise: Estimate the value/quality of.

Dichotomy (long i): Division into 2 parts or kinds.

Proscribe: To forbid by law.

Protagonist: A main contender. An advocate or champion.

Accession: An addition. eg "Recent accessions to the library include..."

Devolution: Handing down to heirs.

Indemnity: Compensation for damage.

Reparations: Compensation, especially for war damage.

Composite: Not prime.

Indefatigable *sic*: Without becoming tired.

Curmudgeon: A surly, ill-mannered fellow.

Worst (vb): To get the better of.

Dulcet: Sweet-sounding.

Dunnock: A hedge-sparrow.

Churl: An ill-mannered fellow. (Churlish.)

Chupatty *[sic]*: Coarse unleavened bread (sp!)

Ciliate: (An animal) with cilia.

Circlet: A band around the head. (circle)

Civet: An African cat. its smell.

Indolent: Lazy.

Periphrase: A round-about way of speaking. Adj: "periphrastic".

Periphrasis: Periphrase.

Perquisite: = "Perk". casual profit. customary gratuity.

Expedient: A device; suitable; more politic than just.

Biretta: Ecclesiastical hat.

Prate: Talk foolishly. speak "solemn nonsense".

Belike: Probably. Possibly.

Arbitrary: Random. not with reason.

Argute: Sharp. of knives. lemons. wit. etc.

Insatiate: That is never satisfied.

Antithesis: Opposition. or ideas marked by sharp contrast in the words. Compare opposite. -> Antithetic(al).

Bombast: Pompous or silly talk. -> Bombastic(al)

Bombardon: A low-pitched brass instrument.

Caprice: Sudden & unreasoned changes of behaviour or opinion or mind. etc; a habit of this.

Capricious: Given to caprices.

Sothic: Of Sirius.

Solicism: Offence against etiquette. idiom. grammar. speech or writing.

Solipsism: The theory that the observer is the only knowable or existing thing.

Extant: *Still* existing.

Etiolate: Make bland by starving of light

Pertinaceous: Holding firmly *[sic]* to an opinion; dogged.

Prevaricate: "To speak in an evasive or misleading way."

Preter-: Past. beyond. e.g. preterhuman

Dialectic: Of disputation or logic.

Thesis: An idea on something. Contrast with HYPOt SYNt and ANTIt

Anserine: Like a goose; hence, silly.

Parturition: Childbirth.

Fascicle: A section of a book published in instalments.

Helve: The handle (of a weapon or a tool)

Ineffable: That you cannot speak about.

Accidie: Sloth, esp. in practising virtue.

Syllogism: "A. B therefore C"

Irenic: Peace-causing

Importunity: Persistent requesting

Opacity: Opaque-ness.